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REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for undertaking a telephone conference regarding this case with the Applicant's undersigned representative, especially in view of the after final nature of the prosecution. In accordance with that discussion, the Applicant has amended claims 13, 25 and 32 to more specifically define the support 105 (11) which depends from the main body of the clamp 100 (1). In particular, the Applicant has more clearly recited the features of the two curved surfaces 105a, 105b (11a, 11b) as best shown in Fig. 3C (Fig. 10), defining the support 105 (11) which is attached to the offset disk 107 (13).

The surfaces 105a, 105b in Figs. 3A-D (surfaces 11a, 11b in the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2) which define the support 105 and 11, respectively, and their respective and relatively differing centers of curvature are important as they assist in exactly and firmly aligning the clamp 100 in the respective holes H1, H2 in the plate 30 as best shown in Fig. 2A. In accordance with the Examiner's request as to the support in the specification for such an amendment, and by way of further explanation, the Applicant's specification in paragraph [0038] expressly describes the utility of this particular feature.

The support 11 has a side surface comprising a first curved surface 11a corresponding to part of a cylinder and a second curved surface 11b corresponding to part of another cylinder. An axis C1 which is the center of curvature of the first curved surface 11a deviates from an axis C2 which is the center of the main body 3. The center of curvature of the second curved surface 11b is located on the axis C2 as the center of the main body 3.

This is an important feature of the present invention because, as subsequently explained in paragraph [0045] of the Applicant's specification:

When the projections 17 are moved to the locating holes H2, by simply sliding the fixing member 5 along the inner circumference of the attachment hole H1 while keeping the second curved surface 11b of the support 11 in contact with the inner circumference, the projections 17 can finally be positioned exactly in the locating holes H2. As a result, subtle adjustment of position is not necessary

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to ensure engagement of the projections 17 with the locating holes H2, and therefore good operating efficiency during attaching operation is achieved.

The nature of the opposing surface 105a (11a) and its relative center of curvature also plays an important role as set forth in paragraph [0047]:

When the circular disc 13 is moved to the attachment hole H1, by merely making the first curved surface 11a of the support 11 abut the inner circumference of the attachment hole H1, the circular disc 13 can be positioned exactly in the attachment hole H1. Then by only pulling the support 11 and the circular disc 13 out of the attachment hole H1, the fixing member 5 can be pulled out of the attachment hole H1 without having the circular disc 13 caught by the plate 30. Thus, good operating efficiency during detaching operation is also achieved.

In other words, the surfaces 105a, 105b (11a, 11b) and the offset nature of their respective centers of curvature on C1 and C2, along with the offset nature of the disc 13 permit the clamp to be snugly and firmly engaged with the plate 30, and also permit ease of detaching the clamp from the plate when desired.

As this feature of the present invention is not believed shown, disclosed or taught in any manner by the Kawai '827 and Anderson '429 references, either alone or in combination as set forth in the after final action of October 15, 2004, the Applicant believes that the above amendment overcomes any possible combination of these references and thus the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the obviousness rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised obviousness rejection should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objection(s) or requirement(s), as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

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In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



Scott A. Daniels, Reg. No. 42,462
Customer No. 020210
Davis & Bujold, P.L.L.C.
Fourth Floor
500 North Commercial Street
Manchester NH 03101-1151
Telephone 603-624-9220
Facsimile 603-624-9229
E-mail: patent@davisandbujold.com